

Downtown
Mountain View's
Historic Buildings:
A Walking Tour

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First, a little history. Until January 16, 1864, when the first train rumbled through Mountain View on its way from San Jose to San Francisco, our city was a small settlement along a stage route that roughly followed the El Camino Real. The settlement centered around Grant Road.

Jacob Shumway, the manager of Richard Carr's store in this old settlement, is credited with giving Mountain View its name.

In 1854, Mariano Castro, aided by Frank Sleeper, began surveying the massive Mexican land grant holdings belonging to the Castro family. Together, they laid out parcels and streets along both sides of El Camino Real. A number of parcels were donated to the town whose main street came to bear the family name—Castro Street.

With the coming of the railroad, development shifted from the older settlement on El Camino Real, and a newer settlement sprouted up around the new train station. The new town was first called "Mountain View Station" because of its proximity to the railroad line. Land for the town's railway station was donated by the Castro family.

One of the first stores built in New Mountain View is the oldest remaining commercial building and the first on the walking tour.

This walking tour of Castro Street is your invitation to step into Mountain View's past through its architecture. Your tour is a two block loop that begins at 124 Castro Street, takes you to the 200 block and brings you back to 175 Castro Street.

The information in this booklet came from records kept in the Pioneer Room of the Mountain View Public Library. The research was made by Barbara Kinchen, historian for the Mountain View Pioneer and Historical Association. Association members Bud Mockbee and Lindley Allen contributed personal recollections. This guide was written in 1990 by association member and past president, Ben DeBolt.



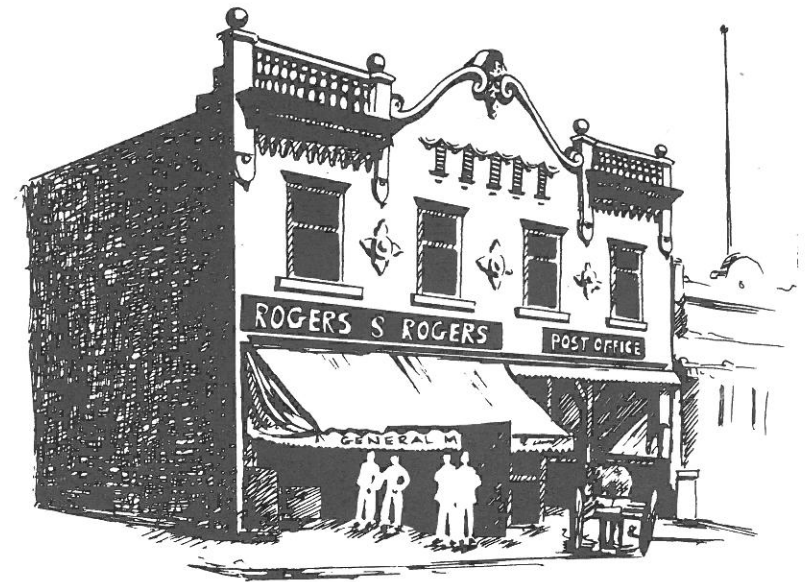
◆ 1 ◆ The Weilheimer Store Building

124-126 Castro Street. Built 1874.

Brothers Seligman and Samuel, had a general store in Old Mountain View from about 1855 to 1880. In 1874 this building on Castro Street was erected to house a branch store called the Farmer's Store. The brothers also took over a hotel on the corner of Castro and Front streets (now Evelyn Avenue). Later, they built and operated a livery stable next door to the hotel.

In 1896 the Farmer's Store doubled in size, and part-brick construction was added to the original wood structure. The first post office was located in this building, as was the office for Wells Fargo Express. Although the 1906 earthquake demolished most of the downtown buildings, this building survived.

From the original Weilheimer Brothers' Farmer's Store, the name changed to S. Weilheimer in 1880, then to S. Weilheimer & Sons, followed by Weilheimer, Hirsch & Co (1904-1914), Rumselburg's (1915-1922), Glann Furniture (1922-1929), the State Market in the 1930s, the Workingman's Store in the '60s and '70s. Then the building began housing restaurants, as it does today.



◆ 2 ◆ The Rogers Building

142-156 Castro Street. Built 1906.

Thomas A. Rogers and his nephew, Arthur B. Rogers, came to Mountain View in 1894 and bought an existing business, establishing Rogers & Rogers General Store. This was the first brick building on Castro Street. Above the store was the Masonic Lodge hall.

In 1902-1903 Rogers & Rogers bought the adjacent land and enlarged the store, doubling its size (as pictured above). Now there would be a rooming house upstairs and two stores below—the general store and the town's post office. In 1906, they enlarged the building, again repeating the use of brick.

The earthquake of April 18, 1906, toppled everything—the original 1880 section, the 1903 addition and the new construction, not yet completed. Rogers & Rogers built again from the ground up, this time using concrete construction and enlarging to four stores on the ground floor with hotel rooms above. Rogers & Rogers went bankrupt in 1908. The post office remained until January 1, 1928.

Other businesses to occupy the building over the years included a stationery and news store, clothing store, cleaners and tailors, a travel agency, grocery store, delicatessen. The Qui Hing Low restaurant occupied the post office part of the building for years. If not the first, it was certainly one of the earliest and longest lasting Chinese restaurants on Castro Street. This same restaurant moved into a new building next door in what is now called the Plum Garden restaurant. The hotel on the second floor remained from 1906 to this day.



◆ 3 ◆ The Jurian Building

194-198 Castro Street. Built 1913.

Andrew Jurian was an orchardist and a partner in the dry goods firm of Odell & Jurian. Occupying the site of a former saloon, Jurian's building had two large stores below and an upstairs hall with a stage and dance floor nearly 50 feet square. The hall was built with no posts or obstructions and was used for dances, meetings, graduations and parties. On

one occasion, the pounding from dancing feet during a Volunteer Fire Department party shook the bottles off the shelves of Doc Johnson's pharmacy downstairs.

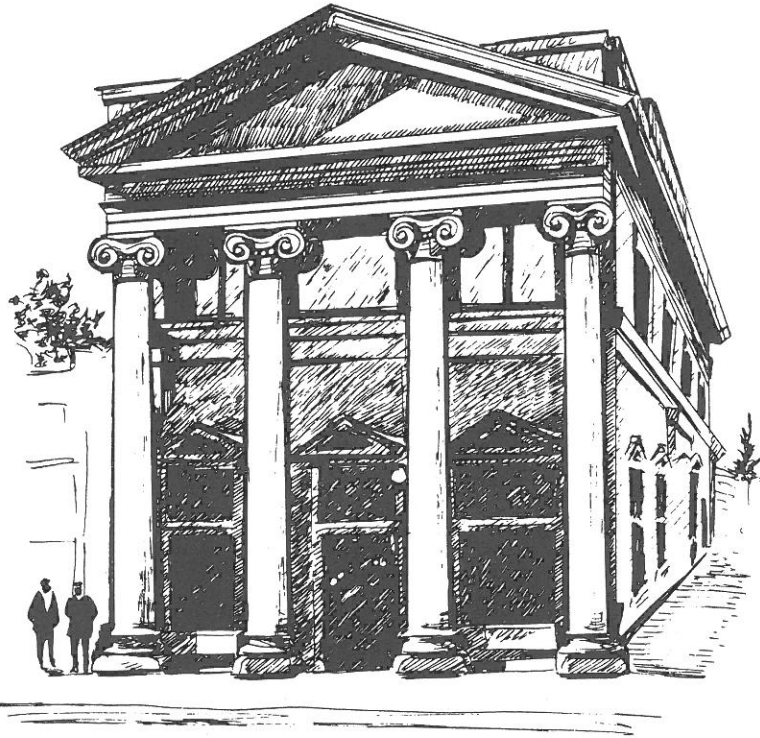
Over the years, the store at 194 Castro Street housed Odell & Jurian, A. Jurian & Co., Finkelstein's, Mrs. J. C. Kennedy, Kennedy & Henderson, Kimball's Dry Goods, Paulding & Kimball, Paulding's Department Store (1918-1928), Purity Market, Thrifty Food Store and State Market & Delicatessen.

The store at 198 Castro Street housed Edward T. (Doc) Johnson's Red Cross Pharmacy (1913-1915), B. J. Miller's Drug Store, Louis Wagner and Ray Winninger's Drug Store (1915-1919), Louis Wagner's Wagner Drug Store (1919-1960), New Image Upholstery, Niko Niko Jujitsu School and a janitorial supplies store. The upstairs meeting hall was used by the Fraternal Order of the Eagles from 1945 to 1961.

The saloon that the Jurian building replaced in 1913 was originally called Haverty's Corner, and later The Palm Saloon. The wooden sidewalk outside was dubbed "Seal Rock" by the locals because it was a favorite loafing place for idle men and boys. In 1909 the wooden sidewalk was replaced with a cement walk.

For a time, a red light hanging from wires in the middle of the intersection was used to summon the night duty policeman to the police station down Villa Street. In 1925 the light was replaced by a special phone with a very loud bell installed on the outside of the building.

The facade of the building is original. In 1927 a storm smashed the drug store's Villa Street side window. The space was later filled in with a solid wall. The original entrance to the upstairs hall was on Villa Street. Later an entrance and stairs were built on the Castro Street side. In 1983, during renovation work, the upper window metal gratings were removed.



◆ 5 ◆ Mountain View Theater

228 Castro Street. Built 1926.

This theater was built by Fritz Campen, the owner of the old Nickelodeon in the 100 block. In 1926 it was a real showplace, with a large stage and pipe organ to accompany the silent movies of the day.

Mr. A. Blanco purchased the theater in 1928 and ran it until 1941. In the 1930s, women and girls received a free dish or cup on "dish night". Some of these sturdy old pieces are still to be found in our local kitchens.

Even though the facade remains somewhat original, complete renovation was done in 1962. When the theater opened again, it caused a sensation by charging more admission for children than adults; the prices were \$1 for adults and \$3 for kids! Ticket lines went clear around the corner.

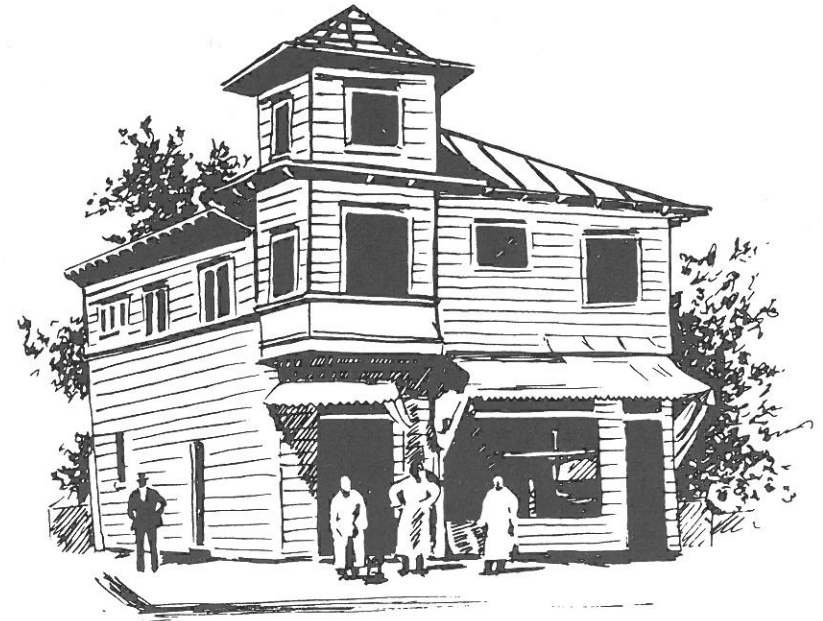
◆ 4 ◆ First National Bank Building

206 Castro Street. Built 1913.

When built in 1913, the bank had four massive columns that reached all the way to the second story roof. It remained a bank until 1947 when First National relocated across the street.

A music store occupied the building for a time, then a shoe store followed by a men's store. It was also a Christian Science Reading Room. In recent years the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the International Order of Odd Fellows have owned and occupied the building. Offices and a small meeting room used by the Rotarians, and others, have always been located upstairs.

Scarpa's Meat Market Building



◆ 6 ◆ Scarpa's Meat Market Building

296 Castro Street. Built in 1908.

This butcher shop was built for Joe Scarpa in 1908 with living quarters upstairs. The shop featured sides of beef hanging on big hooks over sawdust covered wood floors. Here customers could get their orders neatly cut and wrapped right from the hook! Son Orrie Scarpa took over the operation from his father, staying in the business until 1935. In 1940 the building was completely modernized to house Veglia's Department Store. Ten years later came Ralston's Apparel and the Kitty O'Hara store.

◆ 7 ◆ The "Four Stores" Building

279-299 Castro Street. Built in 1922.

Quite large for its time, the Seger-McCormick business block complex was called a "building block" because of its size. If the term, "shopping center" were in use then, that might have described this building nicely. The building replaced the Mountain View Tire Works and a Japanese store.

The corner store space housed Knight's pharmacy and later, Armanini's drug store. The remaining store spaces housed a grocery, Western Auto, and three successive department stores—first Rummelsberg's, then Braun's, then Stanwood's. This retail space has offered music goods, photography, auto parts, and ceramic tile; it has also been the site for Robert Moore Flowers.



◆ 8 ◆ The Swall Building

275 Castro Street. Built in 1904.

Mountain View's Town Hall occupied the upstairs of this building from 1904 to 1909, followed by professional offices including Doc Williams' dental office. Downstairs space was taken by a milliner's shop and, for one year, Miss. Edith Landels' public school kindergarten class. Fred Peterson's plumbing shop was here for a time. Later came Weaver Electric (1907-1924) and Valley Electric (1924-1957) owned by Glen Wilson. A new facade was added in the 1930s along with the Spanish style tile roof, popular at the time.



◆ 9 ◆ The Farmers and Merchants Bank Building
201 Castro Street. Built 1905.

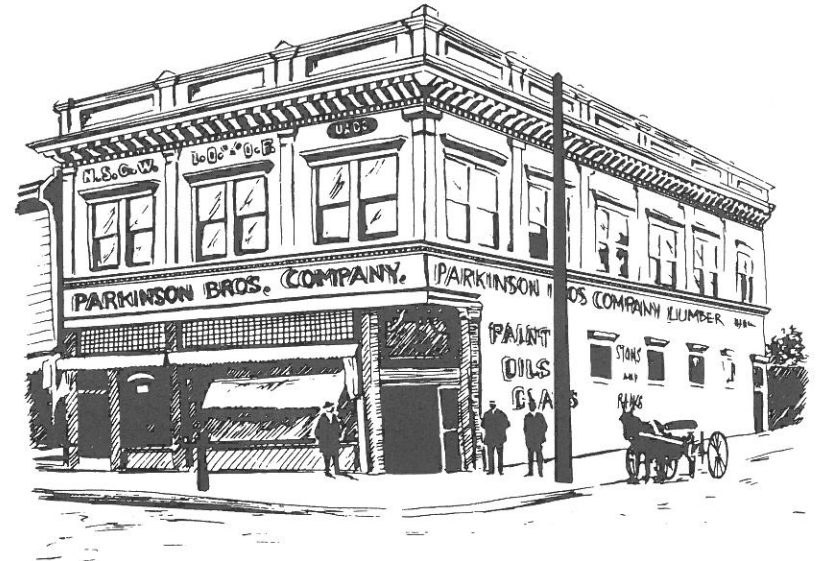
This bank was built in 1905 on the site of a former meat market. The sandstone structure was built to house office spaces above the main floor bank. It was remodeled in 1922 with an addition built onto the Villa street side.

In 1926 the Farmers and Merchants Bank was purchased by the Bank of Italy which became the Bank of America of today. In 1947 the First National Bank moved in from across the street and stayed until 1955. A meat market followed. In recent years the building was again remodeled, adding a third floor of office spaces.

One evening some 50 years ago, as Patrolman Claude Steech walked his beat by the bank, the air was shattered by an explosion blowing out windows across Castro Street and around the intersection at Villa Street.

A disgruntled bank customer, recently foreclosed upon by the bank, had placed sticks of dynamite against the side door. He had purchased the explosive from a local hardware store. Fortu-

nately he failed to pack it with sandbags, so the blast did little damage to the door or the sandstone building blocks of this sturdy old structure.



◆ 10 ◆ The Mockbee Building
191 Castro Street. Built in 1906.

Jake Mockbee owned a blacksmith shop on this corner which was moved to Front Street (now Evelyn Avenue). Jake replaced the shop with this handsome building where the ground floor housed the Mountain View Hardware store until 1962. Upstairs were meeting rooms for gatherings of the Odd Fellows, Masons and the Native Sons of the Golden West. When the hardware store closed in 1962, the St. Vincent de Paul society moved in with its thrift store.

In 1982 the building was completely restored, faithfully keeping the original appearance and trim. After restoration, it housed the restaurant you see today.

The Mockbee family also owned a plumbing shop next door at 185 Castro Street. Their homestead was located on Villa Street behind the building.



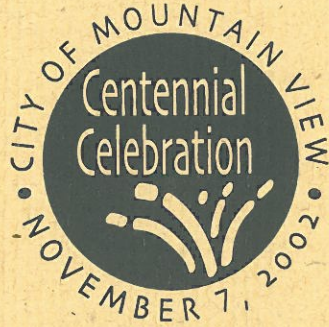
◆ 11◆ The Ames Building

169-175 Castro Street. Built in 1903.

When the earthquake of 1906 damaged the building on this site, its owner Professor Daniel T. Ames quickly rebuilt. Over the years the downstairs stores housed a newspaper, Parkinson's Hardware, a grocery and various restaurants. Mountain View Lock and Key Store occupies the space today.

The upstairs of this building always offered rooms to rent, one of which was occupied by Professor Ames, the building's owner. Ames was a noted teacher and authority on handwriting much in demand by the judicial courts. Professor Ames died in 1909.

You have come to the end of the walking tour. These eleven historic downtown buildings give you a flavor of Mountain View's past. We're very fortunate that so many buildings have survived to our time. Few other downtowns on the Peninsula have been so lucky.



This booklet was reprinted by the
City of Mountain View's Centennial Committee
to commemorate the celebration
of Mountain View's 100th Anniversary.
November 7, 1902 ∞ November 7, 2002

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Printed on Recycled Paper